

Open Letter to Liberals and Moderates who Support Donald Trump

Taken from The Moral Libertarian Horizon, Volume 2

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Firstly, let's start with who this letter is addressed to. If you support Donald Trump and you are neither conservative nor alt-right, then this letter is probably for you. This includes centrists, libertarians, liberals (classical liberal or otherwise), moderates, or those who were just plain old sick and tired of politics as it stood.

Unlike some fellow liberals, I think that the accusation that all Trump supporters are either racist or don't care about racism is absurd. I mean, if it were between Trump and Hitler, Stalin or Pol Pot, I think every single liberal would support Trump too, to use an exaggerated example.

However, I still strongly believe that support for Trump is misguided, and that recent events have vindicated my view. So if you will listen, I will explain why I see things this way.

Trump the Warrior Against Political Correctness and Free Speech?

A recurring theme I have heard among liberal and moderate Trump supporters was their frustration about political correctness. I have heard countless times that you admire Donald Trump for being politically incorrect, and think that he can act as a bulwark to stop political correctness from progressing further. I agree that political correctness and the policing of speech is inherently illiberal, and should be opposed. I also agree that it takes guts to be politically incorrect in this day and age. However, the fact that Donald Trump is politically incorrect doesn't mean that he will be useful in stopping political correctness. Quite the opposite: practitioners of radical identity politics are driven by a controversially expanded version of the Marxist theory of class struggle, and having a president they perceive to be racist, sexist and homophobic will only serve as a call for them to step up their struggle, which is what we have seen since Trump's election. Vulnerable minorities who fear for the quality of their everyday life have also become increasingly predisposed to this kind of 'struggle' politics. The situation for free speech in areas of life that are under leftist control has gotten much worse, as a result. Moreover, Trump's authoritarian governance style has served to erode the pro-liberty consensus, allowing far-left elements to promote authoritarian viewpoints (e.g. that Stalin wasn't wrong because a strong government is required to steer society on a socialist path) much more openly than they did during the Obama administration.

Are Liberals Going Right to Fight the Far-Left?

Furthermore, voting for Trump just because he is the opposite of the politically correct far-left is, in my opinion, yet another example of a worrying trend. In recent years, an increasing number of

liberals and moderates seem to harbour illusions that sticking to rightist orthodoxy is a good way to fight leftist intolerance. For example, the classical liberal Professor Jordan Peterson caused controversy last year when he stated that he would not support marriage equality if it was supported by the neo-Marxist left. Another example is how some self-identified liberals are now refusing to treat trans and non-binary people with due respect, for example by refusing to use their preferred pronouns, because that would be participating in radical feminist social engineering. However, this ignores the historical mission of liberals to consistently support liberty and equality before the law, and oppose traditional orthodoxy that promotes conformity and negates individuality. A rational liberal will also have no problem with treating a small minority of people with due respect and helping to make their lives better, fully knowing that it would have no impact on the rest of the 98% of the population. If there are any radical feminist attempts to use this minority to socially engineer the rest of society (e.g. to 'abolish gender'), we can oppose this separately (perhaps even with the said minority's support after winning their trust). We have to be clear about one thing: supporting and justifying Trump and/or toeing the conservative line will not save liberalism from the far-left; instead it will discredit liberalism and allow more young people and minorities to be recruited by the far-left.

On Trump vs the Social Justice Warriors (SJWs)

The view that SJWs only care about identity politics seems to have caused a lot of resentment, and driven many people to find salvation in Donald Trump, the ultimate anti-SJW. However, this simplistic view is actually incorrect. Far from being committed shills for radical identity politics, I believe that many SJWs can potentially be convinced to come on board the bandwagon of liberty for all. From my experience, most SJWs are actually genuinely interested in improving the lives of people, rather than simply wanting to 'turn the tables of oppression'. It's just that some of them have been influenced by the neo-Marxist school of group struggle identity politics, perhaps without even consciously knowing it. It's sort of like a re-run of the 1960s and 70s, where students who simply wanted to challenge arbitrary authority and protest the Vietnam War were influenced and used by radicals with other agenda. Looking at SJWs today, we need to remember that most 60s and 70s radical students ultimately changed their minds and became rational reformists. A society-wide rational discussion on what liberty and equality for all should actually look like would be able to win many SJWs back to the liberal fold, in my opinion. However, the divisiveness of the Trump administration has been preventing much needed constructive conversation, and progress on this front remains very limited as a result.

On Making America Great Again, Economically

Another reason why many people voted for Donald Trump was a belief in his promise to Make America Great Again. There is little doubt that he sincerely believes that his protectionist ways would revive the American economy. But such thinking is considered outdated by the vast majority of economists. In fact, recent concerns about Trump launching a trade war against China have dampened the prospects of an otherwise healthy recovery. Besides, protectionism is illiberal and authoritarian, and liberals should be against it on principle. We should instead stick to being champions of free trade.

On the Forgotten Everyday People

One of Donald Trump's greatest appeals is that he seems to stand for the forgotten everyday people. It appears to many people that in a world where corporations only care about their own profits, and social justice warriors (SJWs) only care about certain minority groups, The Donald is speaking for the average American. But this couldn't be further from the truth. Donald Trump is not only part of the one percent, he also appears to be just as out of touch with ordinary Americans as the rest of the one percent. His recklessness in attempting to start trade wars that may affect many industries, his tax cuts for the very rich, and his insistence that ObamaCare be repealed, are all testament to this.

In Conclusion

It is understandable that many of you are frustrated. The rise of radical identity politics, the increasing political correctness and censoring of free speech, and the influence of authoritarian ideas in 'progressive' circles are not trivial problems. But Donald Trump cannot be the answer, because he just makes things worse. Instead, we need to work constructively towards restoring faith in the liberal worldview. Being principled about our liberalism would be a great starting point.